

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

S E C R E T STATE 161605

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, WB, US, UK, FR, UR, GW

SUBJECT: RESPONDING TO SOVIET PROTESTS ON BERLIN

REF: A.) MOSCOW 7992 B.) BONN 7745 C.) USBERLIN 1160

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH BASIC ANALYSIS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS REF (A) AND NOTES THAT PROSPECTS APPEAR
FAVORABLE FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF BONN GROUP AGREEING TO
CHANGES IN PROCEDURES. THIS EVIDENCED BY PROPOSAL THAT
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SUBJECT OF HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO SOVIET PROTESTS TO BE

INCLUDED IN WORKING PAPER PREPARED FOR QUAD BREAKFAST (REF B). WE BELIEVE TIME IS PROPITIOUS FOR US TO SUGGEST FORMALLY TO ALLIES AND FRG THAT WE REVIEW OUR POLICY ON RESPONDING TO SOVIET PROTESTS ON BERLIN, AND RECOMMEND WE ADOPT PRACTICES ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED IN REFTELS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RECENT MONTHS THE DEPARTMENT HAS COME INCREASINGLY TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ALLIED PRACTICE OF RESPONDING TO SOVIET PROTESTS IN DETAIL IS NO LONGER NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE. ALLIED POSITION ON THE MEANING OF THE VARIOUS

PARTS OF THE QA HAS BEEN LAID OUT EXTENSIVELY AND IS WELL KNOWN TO SOVIETS. WE SEE LITTLE TO BE GAINED BY CONTINUING ONCE USEFUL PRACTICE OF DETAILED RECITAL OF THESE POSITIONS ON EACH AND EVERY OCCASION SOVIETS VOICE DISAPPROVAL OF ALLIED OR FRG ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO BERLIN. INDEED, WE HAVE NOTED TENDENCY FOR ALLIES TO BECOME OVERLY LEGALISTIC AMONG THEMSELVES, WITH RESULT THAT IT TAKES INORDINATELY LONG TIME TO ARRIVE AT AGREED LANGUAGE FOR RESPONSES TO SOVIETS. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT DELAY IN ARRIVING AT AGREED TEXT COULD BE TAKEN BY SOVIETS AS SIGNIFYING WEAKNESS, INDECISION OR DIVISION AMONG ALLIES, OR POSSIBLY A SPLIT BETWEEN THE ALLIES AND FRG. ADDITIONAL DISADVANTAGES OF USE OF DETAILED RESPONSES, AS INDICATED REFTELS, INCLUDE (A) IMPLICATION TO SOVIETS THAT THEY HAVE A LEGITIMATE FOURTH POWER ROLE IN WEST BERLIN AND SHOULD, AS A CONSEQUENCE, EXPECT DETAILED JUSTIFICATIONS FOR ALLIED ACTIONS OR THE ACTIONS OF THE FRG; (B) PROSPECT THAT SOVIETS MAY SEIZE UPON SOME DETAIL IN ANSWERS TO CREATE A NEW CONTENTIOUS ISSUE. (C) POTENTIAL FOR ESCALATION OF THE ISSUE BEYOND IMPORTANCE OR PROPORTION (E.G. EXCHANGE IN UN ON DEMOGRAPHIC YEARBOOK) WHICH CAN LEAD TO UNDESIRE RESULTS.

3. WE BELIEVE ALLIES AND FRG MUST NOW MODIFY THEIR APPROACH WITH CLEAR AIM OF MINIMIZING THE DETAIL OF OUR RESPONSES AND, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, ALLOWING TO STAND ALLIED RESPONSE MADE AT TIME SOVIET PROTEST HANDED OVER.

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DRAWING LARGELY ON THE MATERIAL DEVELOPED IN PREPARATION FOR THE QUAD BREAKFAST, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THE ALLIES CONSIDER INSTITUTING SET OF GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO FUTURE SOVIET PROTESTS.

(A) IN OUR VIEW, ALLIES SHOULD, AT MINIMUM USE ESTABLISHED CHANNELS IN BERLIN TO PROVIDE RESPONSES TO THE SOVIETS, RESPOND ORALLY ON THE SPOT TO MOST

SOVIET COMPLAINTS, AND PERMIT THESE TO STAND AS OFFICIAL ALLIED REPLY.

(COMMENT: APPLICATION OF LATTER POINT MIGHT BE LARGELY RESTRICTED TO SOVIET COMPLAINTS DELIVERED IN BERLIN, WHERE SENIOR ALLIED OFFICIALS RECEIVING STATEMENT ARE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH ALLIED POSITION AND CAN SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE FOR ALL THREE ALLIES, AND TO RESPONSES TO COORDINATED SOVIET APPROACHES IN CAPITALS GIVEN BY FOREIGN OFFICE REPS. THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY

TRUE IF ALLIES AGREE TO FOLLOW RECOMMENDATION IN POINT (B)

BELOW. IN EITHER INSTANCE, BONN GROUP COULD PROVIDE FORUM FOR DETERMINING WHETHER ANY FURTHER RESPONSE IS NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE.)

(B) TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, LIMIT TEXT OF REPLIES TO SOVIET PROTESTS -- WHETHER GIVEN ON THE SPOT OR, ON RECOMMENDATION OF BONN GROUP OR CAPITALS -- TO DIRECT QUOTES FROM THE QA AND/OR REFERENCES TO PREVIOUS ALLIED STATEMENTS AND NOTES.

(C) IN THE SPECIFIC CASE OF NOTES CIRCULATED IN INTERNATIONAL FORA RESPOND SUBSTANTIVELY ONLY TO SOVIET NOTES, AND REFUSE TO COMMENT AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPAL TO SUBSTANCE OF OBJECTIONS RAISED BY OTHER COUNTRIES NOT PARTY TO QA, AND RESPOND MERELY TO DENY THEIR COMPETENCE.

4. WE DO NOT PROPOSE THAT POINTS SUGGESTED ABOVE BE CONSIDERED AS INFLEXIBLE GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO SOVIET PROTESTS. IN OUR VIEW, EACH SOVIET COMPLAINT MUST CONTINUE TO BE WEIGHED CAREFULLY ON ITS OWN MERITS
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TO DETERMINE WHAT FURTHER ACTION, IF ANY, IS REQUIRED. WE WOULD EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT IN MOST INSTANCES ON THE SPOT REPLY WOULD BE JUDGED BY ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES TO HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT. WHERE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS MIGHT BE CALLED FOR, REFERENCE TO EARLIER ALLIED STATEMENTS AND NOTES TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH REFERENCE TO QA SHOULD NORMALLY PROVE SUFFICIENT.

5. AMBASSADOR IS REQUESTED TO RAISE MATTER OF REPLIES TO FUTURE SOVIET COMPLAINTS ON BERLIN AT NEXT MONTHLY QUADRIPARTITE LUNCHEON IN BONN AND TO DISCUSS BEST WAY OF INSTITUTING SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURES IN BONN GROUP. INGERSOLL

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